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HELLENIC AND ANGLO-SAXON IDEALS OF CIVILIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The age in which we live is one of transition, fraught with tremendous significance for the human race. It finds no parallel in the whole course of history, and least of all in the few brief centuries that make up the life of the English people on this continent of ours. To be sure, there have been other great landmarks in the long and wonderful progress of humanity, which, by reason of their achievements, their fruitful crop of illustrious names, their impetus given to all the better elements of civilization, stand out with special prominence and challenge either our admiration or our interest. But the moment we begin to institute a comparison between their characteristic phenomena and those thrust upon us by the facts and problems of our own day, we are immediately struck with the vast difference between the period in which we live and that of any of its countless forerunners. Perhaps the most marked characteristic of our times is the spirit of unrest, of disquietude—a disposition to break away from time-honored traditions and maxims, and to embark on new and strange experiments with no definitely fixed standards. Although not necessarily betokening an unmixed evil, these vague tendencies in all domains of thought and action are well calculated to make the thoughtful pause and reflect. As a stereotyped expression puts it, “we have reached the parting of the ways;” and this appears to be true not only

in respect to our political life, but also regarding spheres of activity as far removed as can be, in theory at least, from the strife and passions of everyday experience. In religion, in philosophy, in literature, in theories regarding education and human conduct, no less than in the realms of ordinary business and professional careers, we see reflected everywhere and among all sorts and conditions of men the same impatient disposition to exploit the novel and unheard-of; to exchange for experience, experiment; to drift with the tide, often without sail or rudder, and with no set purpose in view. It is this very aimless, purposeless characteristic, this utter lack of fixed ideals now everywhere so rampant, with which we must deal promptly and earnestly, if we would escape individual and national disaster. Hence the importance, especially on the part of the educated, to consider calmly and dispassionately the signs of the times with a view of so constructing the best rules of conduct as to meet those problems which the sweeping scenes of passing events daily put before us for solution.

At the same time, it is well for us to remember that after all not a few of these problems are as old as the human race, and that, however differently clothed they may present themselves, they are the same at all times and everywhere. This vital fact is often lost sight of. The individual, beset by this difficulty or that, or the nation overtaken by novel experiences, may at times be inclined to fancy otherwise; but it is egoism of the worst sort to continue in such beliefs. This will become even more obvious when we recall a few recent events in our own national history. First of all and within less than two decades, we have seen our country burst with startling suddenness from a position of comfortable obscurity into one of world-wide importance, with dependencies beyond seas and with all the outward trappings of imperialism. The sudden transformation of our government from a republic into a quasi-empire is at once a cause and an effect of not a few of the political tendencies already indicated. That we blundered upon a system of colonial government, notwithstanding the most humane and patriotic impulses; that we have inadvertently called down upon our heads the ill-concealed jealousies of less favored lands; and that our

unexpected success in handling the baffling international disputes raised by our new experiences in the field of diplomacy, have in large measure arrested the attention of the world; by no means either lessen the effects of the alterations in our national life, or warrant us in assuming that we may always expect the same success in even similar experience which we may hereafter encounter. For weal or for woe, however, we stand committed to policies for which we are inadequately equipped either by experience or constitutional provision, and for the untold consequences flowing from them.

Of the many fruits of this new era and in large measure its direct product, is the enormous growth of our commerce, foreign and domestic, which is daily increasing by leaps and bounds. Our wealth, moreover, has multiplied beyond the dreams of the most sanguine prophecy, while individual fortunes are even surpassing those of the most favored princes abroad. At the same time industries, long organized and conducted on a small and simple scale, have become in recent years so centralized and enlarged, that between labor and capital, neither of which can in the nature of things now know the other, there are constant warfare and irreconcilable interests. The rich are certainly becoming richer; wealth is rapidly being more and more centered in a few hands; and the poor, if not actually becoming poorer, are certainly more and more inclined to believe that they do not receive a proper share of the wealth they help to create. Meanwhile, exaggerated reports of our prosperity, often carried to other lands by designing transportation agents, are inviting to our shores immigrants of a less desirable quality and in larger numbers than ever before. Thus, our cities, already swollen to undue proportions by the indraught of rural population, are assuming dimensions whose perplexing questions regarding sanitation, morals, education, and transportation are a source of constant anxiety to patriotic men everywhere. These superficial evidences of our prosperity are reflected therefore in a thousand ways; but unfortunately, increased wealth has brought with it a luxury, an extravagance, a love of ease and display, manifested in private no less than in public life, whose sinister influences tend to exalt the material at the expense of the nobler elements

of life, while in the fierce competition born of modern conditions there is often danger of losing sight of the vital distinction between things temporary and those everlasting, the visible and the invisible, the real and the ideal. Even in the matter of education we hear much of "business courses," of "practical studies," as if the training of the immortal mind were a mere matter of dollars and cents, a mere preparation of a boy or girl to gain a livelihood with no reference whatever to the true, the good and the beautiful.

In view of this rank materialism that is obtruding itself into the most sacred realms, it is not unwise for us to look upward instead of downward, to the hill instead of to the plain, to revert to what in our sober moments we believe to be the foundation of true happiness and of true success, for individuals no less than for nations — to distinguish between mere sensual pleasure and that state of mind that springs from what the Greeks were accustomed to call Virtue. In other words, when we contemplate the universal apotheosis of wealth, it behooves us to hold up the truth that the material is temporary and fades soon away, that after all only the ideal is everlasting. Not that these facts are new. From Plato to the present day the best men of every age have insisted upon this principle in season and out of season, and have striven ever to increase the number of the saving remnant. Hence it has seemed fitting on this occasion to contrast the ideals, which, from a secular point of view, have perhaps influenced the world more profoundly than all others. I refer to those of Plato, particularly as set forth in his *Republic*, and those of our own American Republic, especially in so far as they both relate to the question of citizenship — of the individual in his relation to the State. More than two thousand years separate the times of Plato from those in which this great American Republic has achieved its foremost place among the nations of the earth. During the intervening centuries the leading events in human history have occurred; its tragedies no less than its comedies, and as they pass in rapid review before us, they seem to accentuate the radical differences between our times and those of Plato.

As all of us know so well, Greek civilization after a brilliant

career, gave way to that of Rome. The few mud huts along the marshes of the Tiber grew in time into a city destined to become mistress of the world. By a coincidence no less wonderful than it is significant, the foundation of the empire was almost contemporaneous with the birth of our Lord and the establishment of the Church. Then we witness the triumph of that Church, especially after its creed had been defined by Greek philosophy and its government founded on the basis of Roman polity, marching on to triumph in spite of persecution, until, through the development of Papacy, it became at times well-nigh omnipotent. And when we pass to the middle ages we encounter the curious dualism between the Holy Roman Empire, as re-founded by Charlemagne after the barbarian invasion, and the Papacy, as well as institutions like serfdom and feudalism, together with world-important events like the rise of the Italian republics, the crusades, the revival of learning, the reformation, and the rise of modern states. Finally we come to the discovery of America, justly called the greatest secular event in history; and scarcely less important was its settlement by Englishmen with English traditions and ideas; and the revolution that won for us our independence. How that even affected in turn the people of France, and exerted no slight influence in bringing about their own mighty conflicts, and how finally the recent period — or that extending from the downfall of Napoleon to the present day — has witnessed the triumphs of the national principle, of the constitutional principle, of the democratic principle — all these are facts too familiar to require more than bare enumeration.

Thus we see the immense differences between our civilization and that of the Greek. The world is older and better now than then. We have a wider field behind us; riper experience; more exact knowledge. It is quite possible, however, that in the hurry and bustle of modern life we have lost much that the Greeks held to be most dear. Easy communication has made our world smaller than theirs. Great inventions and discoveries, moreover, have added so much to the convenience of living that we may be disposed at times to wonder how any civilized people could ever have existed without

such contrivances as the railway, the telegraph, the telephone, the printing press, gas, electricity, and the countless other adjuncts of modern civilization. But if the Greeks lived plainly, they thought well—better in many respects than we do ourselves.

There are, however, not a few points of resemblance between the Greeks and the Americans which will help us to understand the ideals of the two. In the first place, both were colonists from another land, who after having conquered the country they invaded, occupied it and impressed their ideas upon its civilization for all time. Both retained among themselves, moreover, original minor differences, which were not without their influence on the national character of each. Thus among the Greeks we encounter Ionians and Dorians; among Americans, Northerners and Southerners, each with marked characteristics whose reciprocal traits and influences are stamped on every page of their history. As between Athens and Sparta, so between Jamestown and Plymouth, there were marked differences regarding society and government, which, with the development of a broader national life and after many civil strifes, in time largely passed away. Meanwhile both Greek and American became great colonizers—the bearers of civilized customs, of literature, of free institutions of less advanced peoples. Even among the different groups of Greeks, no less than among the different groups of Americans, there were not a few characteristics in common. A common religion, a common language, common traditions and ideals and standards, all tended to develop common aims and purposes in the midst of minor differences, both in Greece and America. Unfortunately, however, the geographical situation of the former was less favorable to unity than that of the latter. Cut up by mountains and deficient in navigable rivers, the lay of the land was in Greece opposed to political unity, and we find a separatist tendency from the start, which resulted in the celebrated City-States.

Nature, however, was more kind to us. Our whole natural environment made for unity, and the configuration of the country seemed destined for the foundation of a great single empire. Hence, while the loose leagues born in Greece of a common

danger soon died, in our country they soon ripened into union with every indication of strength.

Of the religion of Greece and that of America it may be remarked that in the former neither that of the clan nor that of Olympus appears to have exerted any appreciable influence on conduct. As in all primitive ages, the Greek religion was all-inclusive. The differentiation of the sciences and professions had not yet taken place. Worship consisted largely of ceremonial, and we must look for the highest Greek ideals in their literature and philosophy rather than in their religion. In America, a Christian country (in large measure peopled by sectarian zeal), religion is of English origin. But, however interesting, time and space will not permit a much further contrast of Greek and American civilization, regulated and refined as the latter already is in some degree by Christian ideas and ideals. I will, however, endeavor to set forth briefly the extent to which Plato's ideals and American ideals harmonize; how far the ideals of Christian America surpass those of Plato.

Plato found himself in a world very different from ours, "and yet the visionary towers of his *Republic* blend with those of the *Civitas Dei* of Augustine. Only, though its top may one day 'reach under heaven' it by no means came down thence; but, as Plato conceives, arises out of earth, out of the humblest natural wants."

In his volume on Plato and Platonism, Walter Pater says: "The *Republic*, as we may realize it mentally within the limited proportions of some quite imaginable Greek city is the protest of Plato, in enduring stone, in law and customs more imperishable still, against the principle of flamboyancy or fluidity in things, and in men's thoughts about them. Political 'ideals' may provide not only types for new states, but also, in humbler function, a due corrective of errors, thus renewing the life of old ones. But, like all other medicines, the corrective or critical ideal may come too late, too near the natural end of things. The theoretic attempts made by Plato to arrest the process of disintegration in the life of Athens, of Greece, by forcing it back upon a simpler and more strictly Hellenic type, ended, so far as they were concerned, in theory."

The question which Plato is asking throughout the *Republic*, we may well ask ourselves to-day, "not how shall the state be gay, or rich or populous, but strong — strong enough to remain itself, to resist solvent influences within or from without, such as would deprive it not merely of the accidental notes of prosperity, but of its own very being."

Notwithstanding the fact that more than 2,200 years have passed away since Plato gave expression to his dream of an "Ideal Republic," the echo of his words continues and deserves to be heard. They are as applicable to-day as they ever were, and the best answers to the question, What is it in Plato that attracts us so strongly? are the following eloquent quotation from Benjamin Jowett, his great apostle: "Plato is the inspired prophet or teacher who can never die . . . in whom the thoughts of all who went before him are reflected, and of all who came after him are partly anticipated. In him is to be found the original of Cicero's *De Republica*, of St. Augustine's *City of God*, of the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More, and of the numerous modern writers which are framed upon the same ideal." Again: "Human life and conduct are affected by ideals in that they tend to raise individuals above the mere interests of commerce or the necessities of self-defence . . . most men live in a corner, and see but a little way beyond their own home or place of occupation; they do not 'lift their eyes to the hills;' they are not awake when the dawn appears. But in Plato, as from some 'tower of speculation,' we look into the distance and behold the future of the world and of philosophy; the faith in good and immortality — are the vacant forms of life on which Plato is seeking to fix the eye of mankind."

Some of Plato's ideas which more than others seem to admit of application to modern life, are: that the greatest good of a State is unity; that if one member suffers, all the members suffer; if one citizen is touched, all are quickly sensitive, and the least hurt to the little finger of the State runs through the whole body and vibrates in the soul, for the true State has the feelings of an individual and is injured as a whole when any part is afflicted; that injustice, like mortal disease, is suicidal; that it is a matter of the greatest public concern that the individual

should be adequately educated for the performance of his duty as a citizen; that an active participation in public affairs is not only a right, but is the most important duty of a citizen.

Finally, it was Plato who first distinctly expressed the thought that education is to comprehend the whole of life and to be a preparation for another in which education is to begin again; who provided a system of education which would take the citizen as he is and develop him to the utmost on all his various sides, a system based upon religion and morality and greater harmony of the individual and the State. To quote Professor Dunning: "In education Plato sees the only true way to the permanent stability of the State. The hope of moulding the citizens to the system of the community by legislation must always be futile. If the character of the people is sound, laws are unnecessary; if unsound, laws are useless."

Universal suffrage has no room for existence in Plato's Republic. In the presence of his conceptions, the democratic idea of government by the uninstructed *masses* would prove as disastrous as the monarchic notion of government by the uninstructed one.

Let us then, in common with Plato, the Prince of Idealists, persevere in the pursuit of a high ideal, which will reveal itself more clearly as we progress. At the same time, blending the ideal and the practical, we must seek to understand our own time and its problems in the light of history, and while steadfastly obedient to the vision of that which should be, continue patient and practical in the adaptation of means to its realization.

Thus we see that the distance from the civilized inhabitant of an ancient town to the dweller in a modern city is not, after all so great; that the old thinkers have answered questions and laid down rules, questions with which we are grappling in vain to-day, rules which we cannot but accept. Verily, in the words of the great philosopher Hegel, "we must go back in order to go forward or at least to hold our ground. The earthborn giant may still repair his diminishing life by contact with the dust from which he sprang."

Now what is the Hellenic conception of citizenship — of the

relation of the individual to the State? More than twenty-two centuries ago, Aristotle, the other great Greek philosopher and contemporary of Plato said, "Man is a political animal," and although many attempts have been made to re-state this proposition in an improved form, still, on the whole, none is so good as the original.

Everyone knows, says President Hadley, that Aristotle divided governments into monarchy, aristocracy and democracy; very few know that Aristotle said that there was a more fundamental division of governments, into those which were legitimate and those which were not, the former being based on the consent of the governed and acting in the interest of the whole, while the latter were based on the authority of a class and exercised in the interests of that class.

We must not expect, nor do we desire that the State should ever occupy again the place in relation to the *individual* which it held in the cities of the ancient world. The mechanical and physical conditions of our life preclude this. But when we contrast the life of an average citizen in a modern State, who becomes aware of his corporate relations only when called upon to exercise the right of suffrage or to serve on the jury or to pay his taxes, who is mainly preoccupied with his trade or his profession, absorbed in private business or family concerns, thereby limiting and clouding his vision of the world, we discover that the Greeks achieved something which we have lost, something which we would do well to recall. For the State, to them, as is so well expressed in "The Greek View of Life," was more than machinery; it was a *spiritual* bond, and "public life," as we call it; was not a thing to be taken up and laid aside at pleasure, but a necessary and essential phase of the existence of a complete man.

Aristotle declares that no one must suppose he belongs to himself, but rather that all alike belong to the State; and Plato in his construction of the ideal republic is thinking much less of the happiness of the individual citizens than of the symmetry and beauty of the whole as it might appear to a disinterested observer from without. The best individual, in their view, was also the best citizen; the two ideas not only were not incompat-

ible, they were almost indistinguishable. The individual, though, must be conceived of, not as sacrificed to, but rather as realizing himself in the whole.

Now—the Hellenic conception of citizenship is also the Hebrew conception and the Christian conception. In the Old Testament, for instance, we find Isaiah proclaiming his belief in a corporate righteousness and salvation as distinguished from the salvation and righteousness of the individual. The individual was to be saved as a member of a family—of a holy nation—of a visible kingdom of God. When the prophet speaks of sin and disobedience it was chiefly the sin and disobedience of the whole nation. The heinousness of the sin of the individual sinner was to be judged not by its effects upon the character of the individual, but by its effect upon society. If the injury stopped with the individual it would be bad enough, but when men come to realize that each man's sin—each man's selfishness, each man's neglect of a public duty—contributed to bring about a social wrong and injustice, then the offence of each, which seemed so small—almost trivial—takes on a new significance and becomes a far more grievous fault. In other words, in judging of men's actions, we must judge of them with reference to society—the State—and not with reference to the individual.

And so in the New Testament we find Saint Paul treating sin from identically the same point of view that Isaiah did. When urging upon Christians the duty of speaking the truth one with another he gives as his reasons the demoralising and disintegrating effect of lying and deceit upon the unity of the Church.

No one would question St. Paul's *individuality*, but the baneful influence upon society of *individualism* he is ever proclaiming in season and out of season. Christ in parable is ever striking a blow at the root of a selfish and self-centered *individual* sin. As long as men put first their own business engagements and their personal comforts—their private interests above the larger interests of society, just so long are we going to have men neglecting their duties to society, to the city in which they live, to the State to which they owe allegiance.

The very idea of *democracy* requires that every man in it accept and discharge his social and political obligations. It cannot be too often repeated or too forcibly brought home to the men of this generation that the individual finds his fullest freedom, and attains to this highest and truest individuality in association with his fellow man — in mutual service and coöperation. Neither can the importance to the State of corporate action in all civic and social questions be overestimated. The life of individuals or of States cannot be separated into water-tight compartments. We want individuality and federation, solidarity as opposed to selfishness. Each several man is to realize and to exercise the fullest rational freedom, but to move toward that corporate activity where none is lord, none underling.

Now to what extent have these Hellenic and Hebraic ideals of citizenship become characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon?

In his work on "Personal Idealism and Mysticism," Dr. Inge, the celebrated English scholar, declares that there is a growing tendency in modern thought towards *individualism*, that the Anglo-Saxon is by temperament and training an *individualist*, having been brought up to think that his main business is to assert himself, to make his fortune in this world or the next, or in both; that self-consciousness, self-seeking, self-indulgence,—selfishness in all its forms, is the product of modern *individualism*; that the gospel of self-abnegation has not been much favored by the European races in modern times, either in principle or in practice; that we have been too wont to contrast complacently our own energetic self-assertion with what we call the dreamy pantheism of Asia, and have pointed to the subjugation of the contemplative Oriental by the vigorous European as a testimony to the superiority of our religion and philosophy.

God, we like to say, helps those who help themselves. But the time may be coming when we shall see a little more clearly the limitations of our favorite theories and practices.

Civilization based on *individualism*, Dr. Inge thinks, has defaced or destroyed much of the natural beauty of the globe; has made life more difficult than it ever was before, and now shows signs of breaking up from within. The gigantic aggregations of capital on one side, and the growing hosts of unemployed and

discontented on the other, are a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole system, which cannot be disregarded. Hardly less significant is the nervous overstrain caused by modern competitive business, which in the great centres of population, where the struggle is most intense, seems to be actually sterilizing many families and leaving the world to be peopled by inferior stocks. And now, amid these disquieting symptoms, we see the emergence into power of the Japanese, whose whole morality is based on the self-sacrifice of the individual to his country, who live the simple life, and who set the smallest possible value on the preservation of their own individual existence. The national strength of the Japanese may be attributed to a recognition of the necessity of turning away from selfishness—from individualism—and to the proclamation of the truth of the solidarity of human interests.

Says a recent writer in the Hibbert Journal: "To the Japanese the death of the national soul would be an unspeakable calamity, and the individual lives of all its present visible embodiments must be readily sacrificed to maintain it in vigorous life. The passing of any one individual embodiment is a matter of minor concern, it is unhappily the cause of great temporal grief to the individual's wife or husband or child, but that simply cannot be helped. The dying individual's spirit simply passes from the visible to the invisible realm, and what happier dénouement is possible to a life necessarily spent in building up to greater maturity the grand old spirit of Japan than a sudden passing over to the glorious, undying ghost world."

This quotation will serve to illustrate the cohesion, the solidarity borrowed from the institutional or national principle, and to show that the Japanese civilization is the product of a spiritual life.

Europe and America should learn a lesson from the late war in the Far East and should realize before it is too late that Providence has not definitely handed over to them, and especially to the representatives of robust Teutonic *individualism* the sceptre of the world.

In support of his contention, Dr. Inge draws a striking illustration from nature, where we see the individual sacrificing

himself in the interest of the race. In many species of insects, says he, the act of procreation itself involves the immediate death of one of the parents. Yet these duties are not shirked. That nature was careless of the single life was observed long ago by Tennyson; and assuredly the sovereign rights of the individual are not contained in her Charter.

Schopenhauer saw clearly enough that Nature's purpose is not the greatest happiness of the isolated individual, and that all her baits and traps are designed to induce the individual to sacrifice himself in one way or another. We are beginning to discover that Nature cannot be disobeyed and outwitted with impunity; that we have pushed the truth of personality too far, at the expense of the opposite truth; that we are members one of another. Man is himself only in *relation*, and he is most perfectly himself only in most perfect relations with others and all.

Over against the individualistic initiative of the American soldier so praised in Cuba we must set the organic solidarity of the Japanese so irresistible in Manchuria. Man is nothing, save what he is with and to others. The only good man is the good son, brother, father, husband, friend, neighbor, citizen. Abstract these relations, and what is he? Aristotle spoke truly, "Man is a political animal." The Anglo-Saxon may well reflect upon and be influenced by these Hellenic conceptions.

Into the family (where unity is the most vital bond between person and State) the Individual dies, into the State the Family, into the Nation the State, that through such widening circles personality may rise to the universal life wherein each man exchanges his little work for all men's labor, his little wit for all men's wisdom. Individuals die, the State lives on; States perish, the Nation lives on; Nations waste and decay; Humanity endures and waxes mightier with constant renewals of youth. *Individuality*, the fact and law of each man's selfhood within society, the State should insist on — but not *Individualism*, which is the assertion of selfhood against society.

How then can we blend the Hellenic and Anglo-Saxon ideals of citizenship and better effect *solidarity* and *individuality*?

In "The Commonwealth of Man," Dr. Holland says: "The more complete the individualization or selfing of the citizens, the closer and firmer will be the unity of the commonwealth, uniting them by their inmost and entire souls, rather than by their outward and bodily acts." The idea of the State which the citizens hold as their ideal of citizenship will determine the character of the State. The citizen must feel the State as his soul's soul, and live for a cause, a principle, the triumph of a diviner manhood than self-interest can ever dictate.

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